



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Mental Health Regulatory Agency

Board of Psychology

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House Committee on Behavioral Health

RE: House Bill 2493- Alternative Practitioner Registry

Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chairs Moore-Green and Nosse, Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Mental Health Regulatory Agency, I am writing to support HB 2493, and to encourage an important amendment. This measure aligns with the missions of the regulated boards, to protect Oregon consumers, in a related field- alternative well-being care. However, it is missing an important component, which is the removal of the “Counselor Education Exemption Loophole” found at ORS 675.825(4)(a).

In 2017, the Board of Psychology (BOP)¹, the Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists (BLPCT), and the Board of Licensed Social Workers (BLSW) collaborated in a joint effort to eliminate the education exemption loophole found in the BLPCT statute by introducing HB 2361. The Bill was not successful this year, and there was opposition from alternative practitioners who believed that the removal of ORS 675.825(4)(a) was a threat to their practice. This is when the idea of an alternative practitioner registry was introduced as a middle ground for these providers to become registered and recognized in their profession. The Boards were directed to engage in further discussion and propose a resolution.

As time has passed, there continues to be concern about the public threat posed by untrained and unregulated practitioners. The education exemption loophole restricts the BLPCT’s ability to protect Oregon consumers from the unqualified and improper practice of professional counseling and marriage and family therapy. Since the inception of the exemption, the Board has been forced to dismiss numerous consumer complaints simply because the practitioner did not have a qualifying master’s degree.

We understand that the omission of the removal of ORS 675.825(4)(a) from HB 2493 was an oversight, and ask that it be added in as an amendment. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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¹ Previously called the Board of Psychologist Examiners until January 1, 2018.